

## House Republican Press Release

October 17, 2005  
Press Office: 860-240-8700

### **Rep. Sherer Urges Streamlined Foster Care-Adoption Process**



State Rep. Donald B. Sherer, R-147th, Stamford, New Canaan, is speaking out in favor of streamlining the Connecticut adoption process, which leaves children in foster homes for too long and involves too much bureaucratic delay in adoptions.

Rep. Sherer, who has extensive experience in adoptions and related children's issues, is testifying this week in New Haven before the Connecticut General Assembly's Select Committee on Children Adoption and Foster Care Task Force, of which he also is a member.

The task force is conducting public hearings around the state, which began October 6 and will conclude in Bridgeport on November 2 at 7 p.m. at Housatonic Community College.

"There are two main problems," said Rep. Sherer. "Kids are staying too long in foster care, far beyond the national average, to the point where the issue of foster care and placements in Connecticut are now under a court-appointed monitor."

"The second is streamlining the adoption process itself," Rep. Sherer added, "so that adoptions can proceed relatively quickly. Right now, needy children are staying in the foster care system for years, when they should be in a permanent, loving home."

Rep. Sherer said, "What needs to be done is to make sure there is a plan in place for each child as soon as possible. Either they should be reunited with parents or family members; or if reunification is not possible, there should be a plan for adoption. Our goal is to identify where the delay is, what can be done and how we can streamline the process."

As an example of potential bureaucratic delays, Rep. Sherer noted that background checks of potential adoptive parents could take 10 weeks. Police checks generally take two weeks and clearance by the Department of Children and Families for any child abuse complaints may take 10 weeks.

Rep. Sherer also noted that an adoption crossing state lines expands the delays. If a child is placed for adoption from another state, he said, that involves a time-consuming process of finding a licensed agency in this state to be the receiving agency.

Rep. Sherer said other questions before the task force include:

1. Is our state system of adoption and foster care driven by what is in the best interest of the children?
2. What is being done to implement the Court Monitor's recommendations especially in regards to concurrent planning and court reform?
3. Since both the original and the updated Court Monitor Report recommended that the Superior Court and the Probate Court be analyzed, what is being done in the area of court reform and who is charged with making recommendations to the General Assembly?

Rep. Sherer invites members of the public with an interest in foster care and adoption issues to participate in the hearings.

The schedule for remaining hearings is as follows:

Wednesday, October 19th	New Haven	Gateway Community College
Wednesday, October 26th	West Hartford	UConn - Greater Hartford Campus, Auditorium
Wednesday, November 2nd	Bridgeport	Housatonic Community College, Room A101

Start time of Public Hearings – 7:00 p.m.

Rep. Sherer serves the 147th Assembly District of Stamford and New Canaan in the state House of Representatives. He is a member of the legislature's Select Committee on Children and the General Law Committee. He is ranking member of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee.